

## GOD WORKS ADVERSITY FOR GOOD - Part 6 - Acts 23:12-21 – December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009

- This is part six of a series that we began a few weeks ago back in chapter 22 titled; "God Works Adversity for Good."
- When you look at all that Paul is going through, you can see the fingerprints of God working everything for Paul's good and His glory.
- Here-to-for, we've seen ten ways in which God is working Paul's adversity for good, and we'll now look at the 11<sup>th</sup> starting in verse 12.

### 11. Regardless of the opposition (23:12-15)

12 The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 More than forty men were involved in this plot. 14 They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

- v12-13 We're told about forty Jews who we're plotting a conspiracy and taking an oath to not eat or drink until they had killed Paul.
- v14 They tell the chief priests and elders about the oath they had taken with the hopes of getting all of them to help with their plan.
- v15 They try to set Paul up by petitioning the commander to bring Paul before them so that they can kill him before he gets there.

- So much for the Apostle Paul, and the book of Acts for that matter. It looks like Paul's life will now come to an abrupt end. Not so fast!
- This deplorable plot that is put in place by people in powerful positions will not prosper because God has a plan for the Apostle Paul.

**Isaiah 54:17** No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. KJV

**Romans 8:28-31** 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? NIV

**1 John 4:4** You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. NIV

**John 16:33** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." NIV

### 12. By way of His providence (23:16-21)

16 But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him to the commander. The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." 19 The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?" 20 He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. 21 Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

- v16-17 Paul's nephew heard about this plot and tells Paul, then Paul has one of the centurions take his nephew to tell the commander.
- v18-19 When the centurion takes Paul's nephew to tell the commander about the plot to kill Paul, the commander is very attentive.
- v20 He tells him that the Jews will ask him to have Paul brought before the Sanhedrin on the pretext of wanting more information.
- v21 Paul's nephew pleads with the commander to not give into them because they'll ambush Paul in order to fulfill their vow to kill him.

- God is perfectly and providentially at work behind the scenes as he orchestrates and even choreographs each step to thwart this plot.

One commentator said it this way; "Thus simply and by natural processes, God often works out His will in the world. There is no need for Him to use supernatural means when natural ones will serve His purposes just as well. God delights to work behind the scenes. A storm of rain perhaps, a delay in a traffic jam, or a seemingly chance meeting and, often unknown to us, some danger has been averted or some change of direction has been wrought in our lives. Omnipotence has His agents everywhere."

"They intended to assassinate him upon the [steps] which led down from the fortress to the court. Seldom has a greater crime been contemplated in the name of religion. However, the Lord had a spy upon their secret conclave, and their stratagem was defeated. The deepest designs of hell are frustrated by the Lord."

Charles Spurgeon

*O faint and feeble-hearted! Why thus cast down with fear?  
Fresh aid shall be imparted, Thy God unseen is near.  
His eye can never slumber; He marks thy cruel foes,  
Observes their strength and number, And all thy weakness knows.*